



THE SPIGOT

from the NORTH DAKOTA RURAL WATER SYSTEMS ASSOCIATION

NDRWSA a Proud Sponsor of the 61st Annual Science Fair

Hundreds of students from throughout North Dakota participated in the 61st annual North Dakota State Science and Engineering Fair held at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks in April. Five regions within the state submitted their best projects among junior and senior high school students. Senior high school winners (ninth through 12th graders) became eligible to participate in the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), which was held in Los Angeles, Calif., in May. ISEF is the world's largest pre-college science competition where students from all over the world participate. Thirteen North Dakota students presented research at this year's ISEF.

The North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association (NDRWSA) is one of the many organizations that sponsors regional and state science fair awards. Since 1995, NDRWSA has presented awards to students for projects that address water or wastewater issues. These projects explore many facets of water science, such as improving the quality of drinking water or protecting water resources. Mike Ritteman, Les Sigette, and Rod Stroh of NDRWSA helped judge this year's student projects. "I am always amazed at the originality of projects and the effort put forth by students to uncover new knowledge about the universe we live in," says Stroh.

Kelsey Gaukler of Hankinson High School was awarded the NDRWSA's state award for her project, "The Analysis of Lake Water Quality and its Affects on Crayfish Growth." Kelsey was named as an alternate to attend ISEF. Kelsey received \$100 and a plaque of recognition from NDRWSA. Five regional winners were awarded \$50 and a plaque of recognition.

"NDRWSA is proud of the hard working, dedicated, young leaders of our future," says Eric Volk, executive director of NDRWSA. "We offer best wishes and continued success to each and every participant and winner."

Congratulations to this year's award winners!



STATE WINNER
\$100 and a plaque of recognition

Southeast Region
Kelsey Gaukler
Hankinson High School
"The Analysis of Lake Water Quality and Its Effects on Cray Fish Growth"

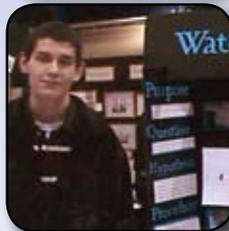


REGIONAL WINNERS
\$50 and a plaque of recognition

Southeast Central Region
Nicholas Knoblich,
Ashley Public School
"Magnetic Water Treatment"



Northeast Region
Taylor Lehar
Park River High School
"Bottled vs Tap"



Northwest Region
Seth Zimmerman
Trenton High School
"Waterventure"



Southeast Region
Gage Metzen
Hankinson High School
"The Phytoremediation Properties of Aquatic Plants on River Water"



South West Central Region
Breanna Nehl
Grant County High School, Carson
"Splash Me"



Support Essential for Water Certification Training

By Rob Johnson, CEO,
National Rural Water Association

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Speaker of the House Carl Albert quickly realized that his two constituents were right. The newly passed Safe Drinking Water Act would shut down his hometown water system in Bugtussle, Okla., and he wanted to do something to help. Marvin Scherler, president of the Oklahoma and National Rural Water Associations, and R.K. Johnson, executive director of both associations, told the speaker about a training program that had been very successful in Oklahoma for several years and how it would help small water systems meet this new act.

To make a long and complicated story short, Albert did help, and the Rural Water Training Program began in eight states in 1977. It started a long-term partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help small systems. In the early days of the program, it was not uncommon for regional EPA staff to attend training sessions and talk with small systems personnel one-on-one. While it lasted, it was good for both the water systems and EPA and created a better understanding about the roles and challenges for both parties.

In the early days, there was never enough time for enough training sessions. There was so much to learn. In the late 1970s, little did we realize that our job would grow to the complexity we see today. Not only has the number of EPA regulations exploded, but the Rural Utilities Service paperwork has increased and now we have Homeland Security in our business also.

The Rural Water Training Programs quickly grew beyond just training. The free time in the sessions became a time to talk about other issues and grew into a forum of great benefits. It was a time to talk with the primacy agency, Rural Development and the State Revolving Agency about pressing and often personal issues.

In the 1980s, the only remaining training specialist in EPA became the project officer for the training program.



Rob Johnson

Ken Hay brought a level professionalism and new training ideas that dramatically moved this effort to a new level. He retired years ago, but his legacy is still impacting this program.

In the last 34 years, many water operators received their initial water certification training through the state rural water associations. Rare is the system person who has not attended a rural water training session.

In 2007, this training program was not funded by the federal government and a number of state primacy agencies expressed their concerns because this is a vital component of their training plans. This year as Congress struggles to pass a budget, several state primacy agencies have written letters of support for this vital program. Congress has much to consider when passing a budget and those who have not told their elected official that they need and support this program, need to do so. How else will they know it is important? In a democracy, it is necessary to express our needs to those we elect.